



United States Department
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National Agricultural
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**Virginia Agricultural
Statistics Service**
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News

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VIRGINIA PRODUCERS HARVEST POOR CORN AND HAY CROPS; OTHER CROPS FAIR TO GOOD

Virginia's 1999 corn and hay yields were well below average while yields for most other fall crops were above average, according to a year end survey conducted by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. Warm temperatures and good soil moisture during early spring allowed for ideal planting conditions in most localities across the state. Drier soil conditions in May and June prevailed causing some germination problems with late planted corn and full season soybeans. Most southeastern localities received ample rainfall during the growing season while soil moisture levels for the rest of the state were mostly depleted. The lack of precipitation in June and July hindered the growth and development of corn and hay. Yield prospects for peanut, cotton, and tobacco were slightly reduced due to damaging rains along with isolated flooding from Tropical Storm Dennis and Hurricane Floyd.

The survey indicated corn yields averaged only 78 bushels per acre, down 6 bushels per acre from last year and down 15 bushels per acre from 1997. This was the lowest yield since 1993 when a summer long drought held yields to only 60 bushels per acre. Virginia producers planted 500,000 acres to corn, unchanged from last year but down 20,000 acres from initial forecasts. Grain production is estimated at 21.8 million bushels harvested from 280,000 acres, down 13 percent from last year and down 28 percent from 1997. Silage yields averaged only 10.0 tons per acre, the lowest since the 9.5 tons per acre harvested in 1987. Corn silage production is estimated at 2.0 million tons harvested from 200,000 acres, virtually unchanged from last year.

Soybean yields averaged a surprising 27 bushels per acre, up 4 bushels per acre from last year. Early soybeans remained in mostly fair to good condition throughout the growing season. Despite extreme dry weather conditions followed by heavy rains and high winds associated with Tropical Storm Dennis and Hurricane Floyd, producers were able to harvest a good crop. These rains were beneficial to second crop soybeans as condition and progress improved. Soybean production totaled 11.9 million bushels harvested from 440,000 acres, up 8 percent from last year's production.

Peanut producers harvested an average of 2,900 pounds per acre, down 50 pounds per acre from last year. Despite initial abandonment concerns, peanut producers had a late but normal harvest in terms of losses. Peanut production is estimated at 217.5 million pounds, down 2 percent below last season's production. Virginia's cotton production is estimated at 150,000 bales, up 3 percent from last year. The cotton forecast for 1999 averaged 667 pounds per acre, down 98 pounds per acre from a year ago. A total of 2,000 acres were abandoned due to boll rot and losses associated with flooding from Tropical Storm Dennis and Hurricane Floyd.

Flue-cured tobacco producers harvested the third highest yield on record in 1999 averaging 2,300 pounds per acre. Burley tobacco producers harvested 2,250 pounds per acre, up 310 bushels per acre from 1998. Total production is estimated at 24.8 million pounds, up 23 percent above last year.

Virginia producers harvested a total of 2.1 million tons of hay in 1999, down 18 percent from last year. This was the lowest production since the 2.0 million tons harvested in 1987. A total of 1.27 million acres were harvested, a 1 percent increase above last year. Harvested acres of alfalfa hay remain unchanged from last year at 120,000 acres. Yields averaged 2.5 tons per acre, down 0.2 tons per acre from 1998. There were 1.15 million acres of other hay harvested with yields averaging 1.6 tons per acre.

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**U.S. CORN PRODUCTION DOWN 3 PERCENT FROM 1998;
SOYBEANS DOWN 4 PERCENT**

U.S. corn for grain production was estimated at 9.44 billion bushels, down 3 percent from the 1998 crop and down 1 percent from the November 1 forecast. The 1999 production ranks as the fourth highest production on record behind the 1994,1998, and 1992 respective crop years. The U. S. yield of 133.8 bushels per acre, was down 0.6 bushel from last year.

The Nation’s soybean production in 1999 totaled 2.64 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the November 1 forecast, 4 percent below 1998 and is the third highest production. The average yield per acre in 1999 is estimated at 36.5 bushels,0.2 bushel below the November 1 forecast and is 2.4 bushels below the 1998 yield.

U.S. all cotton production is forecast at 17.0 million 480-pound bales, up less than1 percent from last month, and up 22 percent from 1998. Yield is expected to average 608 pounds per harvested acre, down 17 pounds from last year. Upland cotton planted acreage is estimated at 14.6 million acres, up2 percent from the August estimate, and up 11 percent from last year. Harvested acreage at 13.1 million acres, is 25 percent above last year. The increases in planted acreage are attributable to the favorableness of cotton as an alternative crop during times of low prices. Harvested acreage increased due to more traditional abandonment levels than in 1998, when high abandonment occurred due to extremely dry conditions.

Peanut production in the U.S. totaled 3.87 billion pounds, down 2 percent from last year's crop, but up 1 percent from the November 1 forecast. Planted area for the U.S., at 1.53 million acres, was up 1 percent from 1998. Harvested area totaled 1.43 million acres, down 3 percent from 1998. The U.S. yield per harvested acre averaged 2,711 pounds, up 9 pounds from 1998. Production from the Virginia-North Carolina area totaled 509 million pounds, down 18 percent from 1998. Hurricanes from early September through mid-October reduced crop yields and caused some fields to be totally destroyed in North Carolina.

U.S. tobacco production totaled 1.28 billion pounds, up less than 1 percent from the November 1 forecast and 14 percent below 1998. Growers harvested 644,250 acres in 1999, about 1 percent less than the November 1forecasted acreage and down 10 percent from last year. Yield per acre averaged1,980 pounds, a 24 pound increase from the previous forecast but down 82 pounds from 1998. Flue-cured production is estimated at 654 million pounds, a decrease of 1 percent from the November 1 forecast but 20 percent less than last year. Harvested acres totaled 304,000, the same as the previous forecast and 18 percent below 1998. Flue-cured yields averaged 2,150 pounds, a decrease of 14 pounds from the November 1 forecast but down 54 pounds from 1998. Burley production totaled 544 million pounds in 1999, down less than 1 percent from the December 1 forecast and 7 percent below last year. Growers harvested 300,400 acres in 1999, less than 1 percent below previously forecasted acres and 2 percent less than last year. Yield per acre averaged 1,812 pounds, down 2 pounds from the December 1 forecast and down 84 pounds from last year.

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